

Message Text

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12

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EB-11 COME-00 AGR-20 TRSE-00 AID-20

OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01

USIA-12 PRS-01 IO-13 L-03 H-02 IGA-02 RSR-01 /113 W

----- 072316

R 280615 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9668

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: EAGR, EAID, CE

SUBJ: BLEAK PROSPECTS FOR SRI LANKA RICE CROP

1. AMBASSADOR HAS RECEIVED BLEAK PICTURE OF SRI LANKAS RICE PROSPECTS IN CONVERSATIONS THIS WEEK WITH GSL OFFICIALS.

2. M J PERERA, CHAIRMAN OF THE PADDY MARKETING BOARD, PREDICTED PROCUREMENT FROM RECENTLY- HARVESTED MAHA CROP WOULD PROBABLY TOTAL ONLY 20 MILLION BUSHELS OF PADDY, AS CONTRASTED WITH EARLIER ESTIMATE OF 26 MILLION BUSHELS. FOOD COMMISSIONER PATHMANATHAN CONFIRMED THIS FIGURE AND THOUGH LATER YALA CROP WOULD NOT PROVIDE MORE THAN ADDITIONAL 5 MILLION BUSHELS WHICH WAS ALSO BELOW ESTIMATES. AS RESULT, DURING LATTER PART 1 973 AND EARLY 1974 SRI LANKA WILL FACE SERIOUS RICE SHORTAGE.

3. BOTH PERERA AND PATHMANATHAN TOLD AMB LOW OUTPUT COULD BE ATTRIBUTED PRIMARILY TO CONTINUED DROUGHT SITUATION. PATHMANATHAN, IN ADDITION, EXPLAINED SHORTFALL IN TERMS UNCERTAINTIES STEMMING FROM LAND REFORM AND CULTIVATORS RESISTANCE TO GSL REQUIREMENT PADDY BE SOLD ONLY TO PADDY MARKETING BOARD RATHER THAN ALSO THROUGH PRIVATE MIDDLEMAN. PATHMANATHAN EXPRESSED PERSONAL VIEW GSL HAD THREE OPTIONS:

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(1) REQUEST PRC TO PROVIDE UP TO 200,000 TONS OF RICE IN ADVANCE
OF ANNUAL AGREEMENT TO BE NEGOTIATED IN DECEMBER. (LAST YEAR
GSL REQUESTED 50,000 IN ADVANCE BUT PRC ABLE TO SUPPLY ONLY
10,000 TONS.) (2) USE FOREIGN EXR ANGDEFOR PURCHASE OF
ADDITIONAL WHEAT FLOUR IN ANTICIPATION MOUNTING RICE SHORTAGES
WOULD INCREASE DEMAND FOR WHEAT FLOUR. (3) WITHDRAW SUBSIDY
FROM SECOND MEASURE OF RICE WHICH NOW SELLS AT RS 1.40 PER

MEASURE.

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
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Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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30 JUN 2005

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